LA CATEDRA DE FLAMENCOLOGIA - 25 YEARS

(translated and edited by Paco Sevilla)

On the occasion of its 25th anniversary (officially, September 25, 1983), the Cátedra de Flamencología de Jerez de la Frontera published a pamphlet describing a little about its activities and history. We have translated some of the more interesting parts here:

The Cátedra de Flamencología y Estudios Folklóricos Andaluces is an academic institution that has as its objective the study, investigation, salvation, preservation, promotion, defense, and dissemination of the art of flamenco and the genuine folklore of Andalucía. It developed out of several other groups -- the Grupo Atalaya, made up of young writers and artists, the Centro Cultural Jerezano, and as a continuation at a higher level of the Peña Artística y del Folklore that was active in Jerez in the 1940's and '50s.

The Cátedra was officially founded on September 24, 1958, as an autonomous and special section of the Centro Cultural Jerezano - (later called the Ateneo de Jerez); in 1960, it first called itself "Cátedra", and it began to have a proper and independent life as an academic corporation, in 1973. When the Cátedra was founded, there was a need to save and restore the flamenco dances and songs, as well as much of our other folklore, which were dangerously close to the point of disappearing. So, for the first time in Andalucía there could be a serious, permanent and continuous means of studying this material.

The main governing body is The General Assembly, headed by a "Consejo Rector" (Governing Council) and assisted by a "Consejo Asesor" (Consulting Council), both of which are divided into different areas of work. At the same time, the Cátedra is divided into four specialized branches: Aula de Cante "Manuel Torre," Aula de Baile "Juana la Macarrona," Aula de Guitarra "Javier Molina," and Aula de Folklore Andaluz. As a special section, with its own board of trustees, there is the Museum of Arte Flamenco.

The members, which are elected, include scholars, researchers, critics, professional artists, and reliable aficionados from all over Andalucía, as well as some from outside the region.

Since 1974 the Cátedra de Flamencología has occupied a large two story building contributed by Domecq -- which also helps out with the maintenance. The bottom floor houses the office of the secretary, the library, record collection, archives, lobby, assembly hall and conference room. All the walls of the floor and all of the second floor (still quite insufficient) are occupied by materials of the Museo del Arte Flamenco.

Aside from Domecq, which has helped in many activities, the most consistent and important sponsors have been the Government of Jerez, the Caja de Ahorros de Jerez, the Diputación Provincial de Cádiz, Exporters of Sherry and the Consejo Regulador "Jerez-Xérés-Sherry." The Cátedra has also received, during its 25 years of existence, important help from the Department of Education, Science and Culture, as well as from the now defunct Department of Information and Tourism.

Upon completing its silver anniversary, the Cátedra de Flamencología would like, by all means, to improve its infrastructure, such as that of the museum, to form an official board to seek finances for all types of activities, to incorporate modern audiovisual media for research and study, to reinstate the plan for publishing flamenco material, and to promote scientific meetings, seminars, contests, etc. Also, it would desire to continue the annual festival "Flamenco en Jerez," "La Fiesta de la Bulería" and the International Summer Courses.

Some Outstanding Activities of These 25 Years:

1958-Founding of the Cátedra. The beginning of a scholarly radio program in Jerez that lasted for several years.

1959-Commemorative plaques were placed on the houses where the cantaor Manuel Torre and the guitarist Javier Molina were born.

1960-The inauguration of the Servicio de Publicaciones, with the first issue of the magazine, Flamenco. Later, there were two more issues of the magazine and some books and pamphlets.

1961-First "Curso Nacional de Cante Andaluz" and the first "Festival Flamenco de Arcos de la Frontera."

1962-National homage to the Honorary Director of the Cátedra, Antonio Mairena, after he was awarded the "Llave de Oro del Cante."

1963-Beginning of the International Summer Courses and the festival "Flamenco en Jerez," which have continued annually since then.

1964-The first "Semana Nacional Universitaria de Flamenco." Creation of the National Flamenco Awards that have been given annually until 1980. Beginning in 1983, they will be awarded every three years. [Jaleo has tried, ever since it began, to get a list of the "Premios Nacionales" awarded by the Cátedra, but all efforts have met with only limited success -- they send only partial lists and say they can't find a complete list, but will send one some day]

Here are some of the major awards:

Cante: Terremoto de Jerez (1965), Aurelio Sellé (1966), Antonio Fernandez "Fosforito" (1968), Antonio Nuñez "Chocolate" (1969), Manuel Vargas (1970), Antonio Mairena (1971), Enrique Morente (1972), Rafael Romero (1973), Camarón de la Isla (1975), Juan Peña "Lebrijano" (1979).

Baile: Rosa Durán (1965), Antonio (1966), Trini Espaňa (1967), Loli Cano "Solerade Jerez" (1968), Manuela Vargas (1969), Matilde Coral (1970), "Trio Madrid" (El Güito, Carmen Mora, Mario Maya) (1971), Merche Esmeralda (1972), Faico (1973), El Farruco (1975).

Guitar: Sabicas (1965), Melchor de Marchena (1966), Juan Serrano (1967), Manuel Cano (1968), Manuel Morao (1969), Paco de Lucía (1970), Victor Monje "Serranito" (1971), Manolo Sanlucar (1972), Parrilla de Jerez (1973), Paco Cepero (1975), Enrique de Melchor (1979).

There have also been awards (not every year) for teaching, records, research, poetry, newspaper articles, radio-TV, and, of course, Donn Pohren was given an ward in 1970 for his books, The Art of Flamenco and Lives and Legends of Flamenco.

1965-Commemoration of the centennial of the birth of the cantaor Don Antonio Chacón.

1966-Beginning of the creation of the Museo del Arte Flamenco.

1967-Creation of the "Fiesta de la Bulería" to elevate the cante of Jerez and award, each year, the "Copa Jerez" to the best local artist.

1968-First "Florales del Flamenco" in memory of the poet Ricardo Molina, repeated in 1969, and again in 1978 on the occasion of the centennial of Manuel Torre. The Cátedra is in charge of the "I Velada de Cante Jondo" in Lora del Río (Sevilla).

1971-First "Festival Flamencología" in the Teatro María Guerrero in Madrid.

1972-The Department of Education and Science authorizes the functioning of the Museum of Flamenco.

1973-Approval of the new "Statutes of the Cátedra" as an independent cultural center.

1974-Domecq donates the present building to the Cátedra and Museo. Debut of the "Concierto de Jerez," promoted by the Cátedra, composed by Benito Lauret, with the Symphonic Orchestra of Jerez, and Manuel Morao as guitar soloist.

1975-Beginning of round table discussion called "Cátedra Viva" with the participation of peñas, artists, and aficionados.

1976-Homage to the Jerez cantaora Antonia Suárez. Debut of "Retablo flamenco" with Parrilla de Jerez on guitar and Alejandro Villatoro on piano.

1977-National Assembly of Flamenco Organizations.

1978-Commemoration of the I Centennial of the birth of Manuel Torre, with celebrations in Jerez and Madrid.
1979-Debut of the Misa Flamenca de la Nochebuena de Jerez, directed by Parrilla.
1980-Fiestas de la Nochebuena de Jerez.
1981-Participation by the Cátedra in the artistic organization of the traditional "Tablaos de la Fiesta de la Vendimia," celebrated in honor of Fernando Terremoto, who died the night before.
1982-The record "Así canta nuestra tierra en Navidad" is made by the "Coro del Aula del Folklore Andaluz" of the Cátedra.
1983-Silver anniversary. Making of a second record of Villancicos.

Official Address of the Cátedra:
Cátedra de Flamencología y Estudios Folkloricos Andaluces
Calle Quintos, No. 1 (Edificio Domecq)
Apartado de Correos, 246
Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz), Spain